

Do teachers really want to work a 4-day week?

Last week the government released its new [Teacher Retention & Recruitment Strategy](#), which includes a major push on job shares and more part-time working opportunities, on the basis that greater flexibility will keep teachers who otherwise might leave the classroom altogether.

Over the past year, your [Teacher Tapp](#) answers suggest there is a huge appetite among teachers for part-time working.

We tested this appetite in different ways. For example, we straight-up asked if people would like to change their hours of work. Given a free choice, 42% of teachers said they would decrease their working hours.

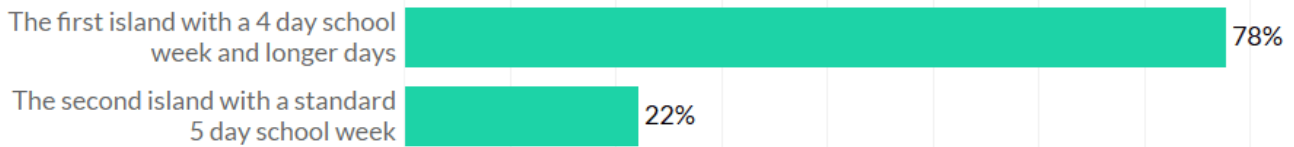
If you had a free choice, would you like to change your contractual hours of work?



Another time, we gave the option of two fictional islands - one where teachers work longer hours on 4 days or shorter hours over 5 days. Teachers overwhelmingly picked the 4-day option.

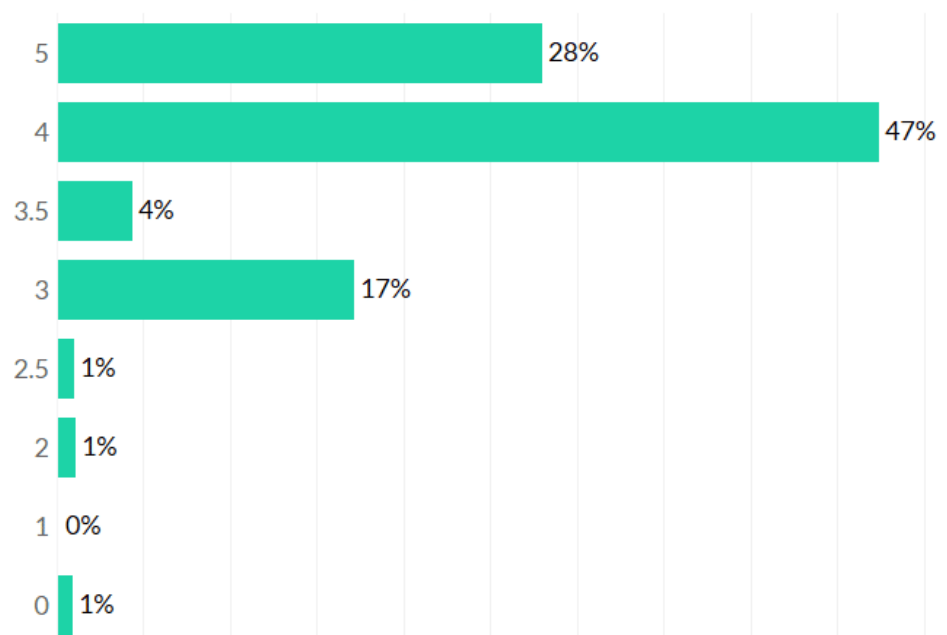
You are moving house with your (perhaps hypothetical) school-aged children. You can choose between two new islands on which to settle.

On the first, schools are open Monday-Thursday from 8:45 - 4:15 each day. On the second, schools are open Monday-Friday from 8:45 - 3:15 each day. Both have the same holiday patterns. Which island will you choose to live on?



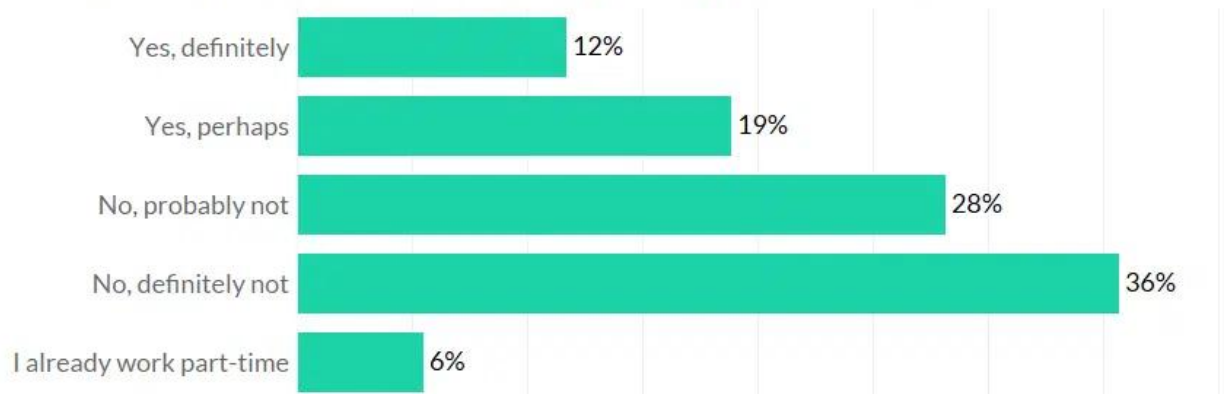
Asking about an ideal world, and taking into account a reduction in pay, the 4-day option still wins (by a long way).

In an ideal world, and taking into account any loss in salary, how many days a week would you work?



At the more extreme end, when we asked about the government's 3-day option we still got 12% of teachers saying they would definitely want to take it, and 19% saying they might.

Today, one of the Government's proposals is to create a site to make it easier to find a job share partner. If you were able to find someone to share your job with (and taking account of any loss in salary), would you consider working 3 days a week or less?



Hence, there is good reason to believe that between 20 and 45% of teachers would reduce their teaching hours if it was made easier.

But... what about the money? ?

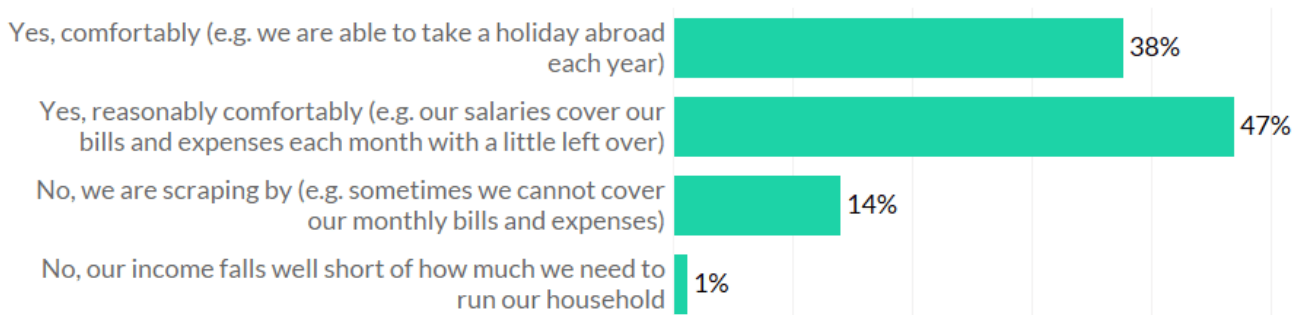
When faced with these figures on social media, some people argued that few teachers could genuinely drop their hours, because they need the money. Primary head, Michael Tidd, made the point in a characteristically astute way:

<https://twitter.com/MichaelT1979/status/1092089516670836737>

So... let's test this, can lots of teachers afford a drop to 4 days a week?

Around 4 in 10 teachers (38%) are financially comfortable, and almost half (47%) are reasonably financially comfortable. Just 15% of teachers are financially scraping by or struggling.

As a household, do you earn enough money to live on and save? Tick the response that most closely applies.



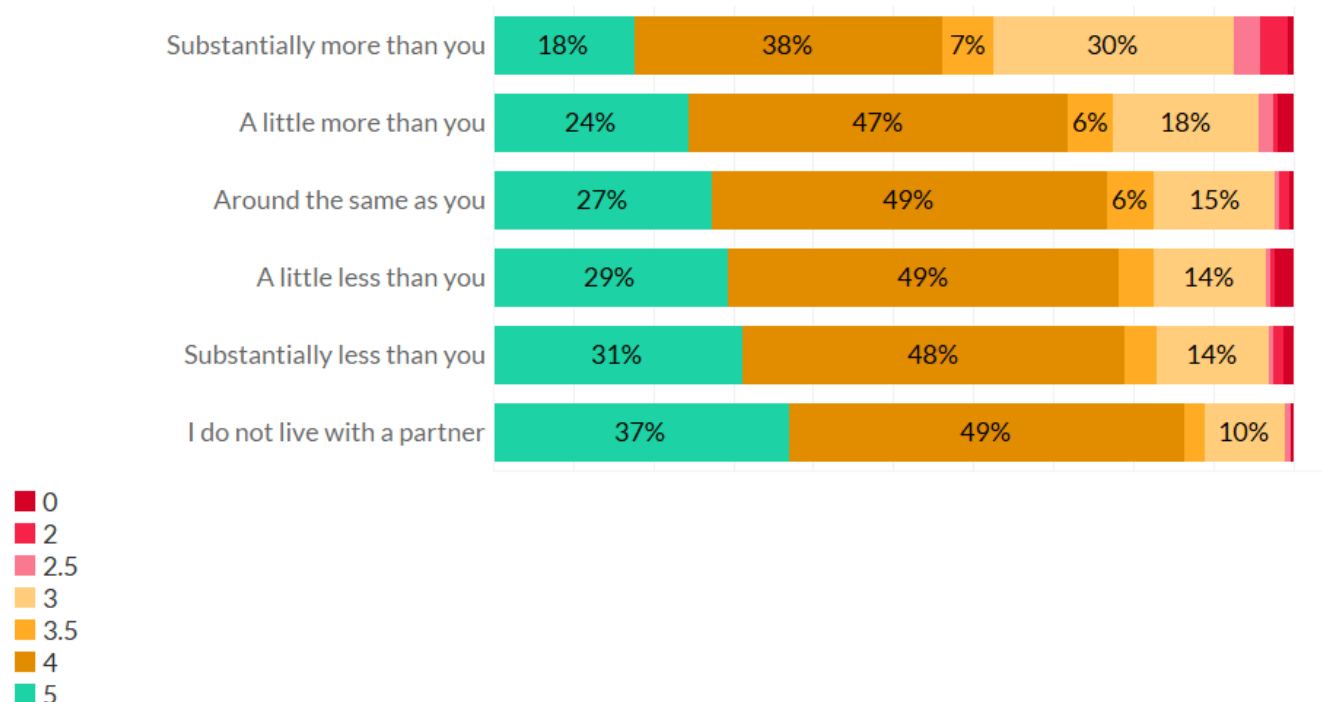
How can this be? Well, around half of teachers in their 50s have already paid off their mortgage, and housing costs have remained relatively low in the north over the past decade. Hence, teachers in that part of the country tend to retain quite a bit of their salary and are able to pay them off earlier. Do not discount how important this is. Only 17% of teachers who have paid off their mortgage said they would choose to work full-time.

Childcare is expensive, but only half of teachers have children, and of the half that do, around a quarter have children over secondary age, meaning around 75% of teachers don't have any childcare costs.

Finally, teachers typically live with a partner. (Only 14% don't). And that partner usually brings in income from their own job, which can be a lot more than a teacher salary. Around 27% of teachers on our panel live with someone earning more than them.

If you have a lot of money coming into your household, this changes your working preferences. The graph below shows the preferred number of work days for a teacher depending on how much their partner earns. As you can see, the top line, which represents teachers with a partner earning substantially more, has the most people who would choose a 3-day week as their ideal. Single teachers, meanwhile, are the most likely to choose the 5-day option - presumably as they are least financially able to do otherwise.

Preferred number of days to work, by whether your partner earns more or less than you



Money therefore matters for part-time work. There are other barriers, too. Teachers may believe they won't get promoted or won't be as good at their job if they are not in every day, but there are good reasons to believe that if part-time work is easier, a decent slice of teachers are well-off enough to afford a drop in work hours.

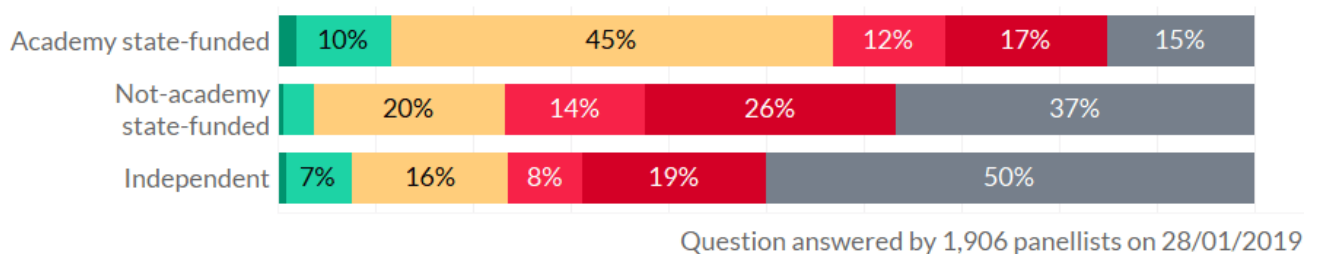
A few other findings from this week...

Academy Autonomy

A teacher got in touch and asked us to dig into the amount of autonomy given to classroom teachers in academies.

Panellists differed in their views depending on the school they now taught in. Those in academies were more ambivalent, with 45% saying they had neither more nor less autonomy than in maintained schools; while teachers in non-academy schools were more negative, with 40% claiming academies gave less autonomy to classroom teachers.

Over half of children in England now attend an academy school. In your view, do academies offer classroom teachers more or less autonomy?



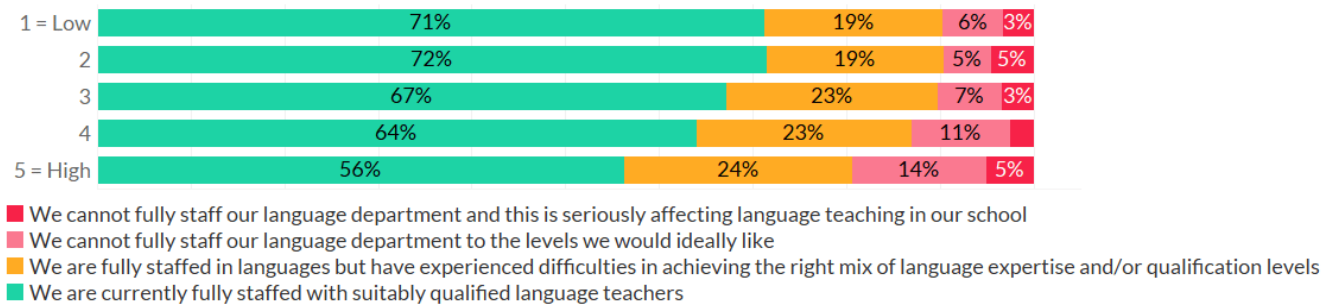
Answer Text

- I don't know
- Much less autonomy
- Slightly less autonomy
- Neither more nor less autonomy
- Slightly more autonomy
- Much more autonomy

Languages

Not a surprise, but a good reminder that schools with high levels of free school meals really struggle to get the right language teachers and that, across the board, around 10% of schools are struggling to deliver languages due to staffing issues. Making the EBacc compulsory for 90% of children is not going to help this.

What do you know about the staffing of languages at your school? Tick the response that most closely applies.



And finally, we know you love the tips, so here are last week's...

[The gender achievement gap Asian American students](#)

[Lesson-planning and curriculum as a narrative](#)

[How to help children persist with habits](#)

[Burn your data trackers](#)

[Make the most of your teacher mornings](#)

[How to teach using visualisers and booklets](#)

Next week...

We have been digging around in our data on behaviour and will be going back to look at what's happening now we're almost half-way through another half-term. Have things got better since the autumn? Or worse? Keep tapping to help us find out.